

Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo
Friday, December 4, 2015

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December 18: Student [exit data](#) calculation due

Notes from Commissioner Wagner

1. Governor Raimondo's Children's Cabinet releases five-year strategic plan

Yesterday, Governor Raimondo's Children's Cabinet released a data-driven strategic plan to drive improvements in outcomes for Rhode Island children over the next five years. A news release from Governor Raimondo noted that, for the first time, the plan "articulates shared goals and objectives across the state's child-serving agencies, setting expectations to hold state government accountable for collaborating to improve child health, safety, and well-being."

The Children's Cabinet strategic plan will ensure that each member of the Raimondo administration focuses on opportunities and outcomes for Rhode Island children. Providing our children with safe and secure learning environments and with the knowledge, skills, and support they need for future success is the right thing to do for our families and for our state.

The plan focuses on five areas that are critical to child well-being and development:

- physical health and safety;
- behavioral and emotional security;
- academic empowerment and career-readiness;
- social, cultural, and civic engagement; and
- family and community stability.

The plan identifies 12 objectives critical to achieving these desired outcomes, as well as potential indicators and baseline data for use in measuring progress.

The strategic plan is posted here:

[http://www.kids.ri.gov/documents/Childrens%20Cabinet%20Adopted%20Strategic%20Plan 2015-2020.pdf](http://www.kids.ri.gov/documents/Childrens%20Cabinet%20Adopted%20Strategic%20Plan%202015-2020.pdf)

2. Schools, communities invited to screen *Most Likely to Succeed* as part of on-going discussion on re-imagining high schools

In October, we met with several hundred Rhode Island educators to view a documentary film on entrepreneurship, innovation, and public schools: *Most Likely to Succeed*. Following the screening, Ted Dintersmith, co-author of the book *Most Likely to Succeed: Preparing our Kids for the Innovation Era*, joined us for a discussion and reflection on where our schools should be heading – and how we can help them get there. We want to continue this statewide conversation about how we can reimagine our high schools and truly prepare our students for success in the 21st-century world of work. Through Ted Dintersmith's generosity, we will have access to a limited number of DVDs that we can provide for free. If you would like to have a DVD of the film – in particular, to view the film with members of your team and your community – please send us an email to info@ride.ri.gov, and please let us know how we can support you in these ongoing discussions about the future of our high schools.

3. RIDE highlights “featured educator,” adds teachers’ blog to website

We're pleased to let you know that we have added a new topic to the home page of our [website](#): the "Featured Educator." Our first featured educator is Kayla Emery, of the North Cumberland Middle School. You can read Kayla's blog post on using "thinking maps" to teach mathematics here:

www.ride.ri.gov/DTOYblog.

4. Meghan Hughes selected as next CCRI president

We welcome Dr. Meghan Hughes as the fifth President of the Community College of Rhode Island. The Council on Postsecondary Education selected her on Wednesday as the next CCRI president.

Board of Education Chair Barbara Cottam said: "Dr. Hughes has a successful track record of building partnerships with industry and community leaders and promoting student success through her work with Year Up. Her strategic and creative initiatives, both locally and nationally, combined with her powerful local network, will bring development of innovative programs at CCRI that serve the students and Rhode Island well."

The news release from the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner noted that, from 2009 through 2015, Hughes led Year Up Providence as its Executive Director and served on the non-profit's national management team. With fifteen locations nationwide, Year Up offers one-year, intensive training programs that provide low-income young adults with a combination of hands-on skill development, college credits, and corporate internships. Under Hughes's leadership, Year Up Providence doubled in program size and developed key workforce

partnerships with leading Rhode Island companies, including CVS, Hasbro, Lifespan, and Gilbane.

We look forward to working with Dr. Hughes on many joint initiatives, such as Prepare RI, that support our students and prepare them for success beyond high school and in challenging careers.

5. *Repeating from 12-1-15 Field Memo Alert: RIDE updates 2015 PARCC report with revisions to percent of students tested*

The 2015 PARCC reports that we provided to you two weeks ago included data on the percentage of students tested as well as the student results at each performance level (e.g., percent of students meeting expectations).

Some of you noticed that the field marked “Total # of Students” did not represent all of the students eligible for testing within your schools, and that, as a result, your percentage of students tested (% Tested) was too high.

Upon review, we learned that some students were inaccurately coded. As a result, some of the students who were not tested were omitted from the files used to calculate the percentage of students tested. We have corrected these coding errors and loaded new, corrected files into the District Exchange. We are also reposting the corrected report on results on our website.

It is important to note that the coding errors had *no impact* on the state, district, or school performance data. We calculated performance data (percent of students at each scoring level)

based on the number of students actually tested; the actual testing numbers were accurate.

The impact on percent of students tested is very small for most schools. Statewide, the changes are:

	% tested	change
Statewide		
English Language Arts	88	-2 points
Mathematics	90	-1 point
Elementary School		
English Language Arts	95	no change
Mathematics	96	no change
Middle Schools		
English Language Arts	90	-2 points
Mathematics	91	-2 points
High Schools		
English Language Arts	77	-2 points
Mathematics	77	-4 points

Please also note that the percent of students tested differs from the “participation rates,” which we will calculate and use for school-accountability purposes. **Today** (December 4), we will send you your participation files at the individual-student level. Once you approve the accuracy of the files, we will apply the accountability rules to calculate participation rates (e.g., students in a school for less than a year are not included in the calculation of participation rates). You should carefully review the data in these files; we will schedule a webinar to provide you and your staff with an overview of how to review the files.

As always, thank you for the careful review of your data as you receive it. This partnership helps ensure that we are able to report

data accurately. Please contact Mike Ferry, at Michael.Ferry@ride.ri.gov, if you have questions the PARCC data on participation and on student performance.

6. Students selected as R.I. delegates to the U.S. Senate Youth Program Washington Week

Congratulations to the Rhode Island students selected to be our delegates to the United States Senate Youth Program 54th Annual Washington Week. The delegates are:

Keith Jillette, Woonsocket High School; and
Zachary Johnson, East Greenwich High School

The alternate delegates are:

Maura Goss, Portsmouth High School; and
Nicholas Guarino, East Providence High School.

Keith and Zachary will join delegates from all other states for a week-long Government and Leadership Education Program, in Washington, D.C. Each delegate receives a \$5,000 college scholarship. The U.S. Senate sponsors the program, which The Hearst Foundations finance.

From RIDE

Technology:

7. Virtual-, digital-learning resources updated on the RIDE website

It was a thrill to have more than 1,000 educators attend the Innovation Powered by Technology Conference in October! There was such great energy and excitement about reimagining and personalizing education in Rhode Island. We have updated the RIDE website to provide a plethora of resources needed to continue the conversation and momentum. The virtual-learning area of the site has been reconfigured to provide easier access to current and robust tools and resources to help #EmpowerRI. Search “Virtual Learning” on the RIDE website or visit:

<http://ride.ri.gov/VL>

When you visit our site, be sure to visit the link to [In the SPOTLIGHT!](#) We want to help tell your personalized-learning story. Nominate a digital-learning champion or submit an article for the Blended Learning Chronicle. RIDE is dedicated to documenting and sharing experiences and raising awareness of the blended educational movement occurring in Rhode Island. Share the story of what is going on in your district, school, or classroom as we become the first blended-learning state in the nation. Submit a 500- to 800-word article by **December 15** for the next publication.

Evaluations:

8. RIDE to host drop-in sessions to receive feedback on teacher-evaluation performance descriptors

In the spirit of continuous improvement, RIDE seeks feedback on the extent to which current [performance level descriptors](#) for teacher evaluation capture our shared expectations for teacher performance. All teachers, school administrators, and district administrators are invited to drop-in sessions to provide feedback

and suggest revisions on what it means to be Highly Effective, Effective, Developing, and Ineffective. The sessions will take place on:

- Tuesday, **December 15**, from 4 - 6 p.m., at Lincoln Middle School, 152 Jenckes Hill Road
Register at:

<http://www.eventbrite.com/e/performance-level-descriptor-pld-open-feedback-session-1-tickets-19827973001>

- Wednesday, **January 6**, from 4 - 6 p.m., at the West Bay Collaborative, 144 Bignall St., Warwick
Register at:

<http://www.eventbrite.com/e/performance-level-descriptor-pld-open-feedback-session-2-tickets-19828491552>

Feedback at the sessions will be used to inform revisions to the performance-level descriptors, which will be used by all teacher-evaluation models in the state. If you have any questions about these sessions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Carrie Appel, at carrie.appel@ride.ri.gov, or Lisa Foehr, at lisa.foehr@ride.ri.gov.

Data Collection and Reporting:

- 9. LEAs reminded to code students accurately for daily attendance reporting**

Attendance data includes information for every school day for every student and the data describe each student's attendance in a school. This collection collects days of attendance, days of absence, days of tardiness, and days of early dismissal. The attendance-data submission is an existing submission that LEAs have been submitting to RIDE on a daily basis since the 2008-09 school year. In order to facilitate more accurate attendance reporting, we are asking that you code students properly when they are present, absent, tardy, or dismissed early during the school year.

If you have any questions about reporting attendance, please submit a help desk ticket, at:

<https://support.ride.ri.gov>.

10. LEAs reminded to identify online or blended course sections in TCS data collection

Upon reviewing the course and section data in the Teacher, Course, Student data collection, it appears that LEAs are not coding their online and hybrid courses properly. In particular, this problem occurs with those sections of a course that are in a non-classroom setting. LEAs are undertaking wonderful blended learning initiatives; however, if those sections of a course are not coded as an online or hybrid course, these blended-learning opportunities will not be reported as such. The section file of the Teacher, Course, Student collections has a field that identifies the setting in which the student is receiving instruction. This field should be updated to identify those sections that are online or hybrid sections of a course. The proper codes can be found in the [data collection specification](#) or the [data dictionary](#). The [Virtual Learning Reporting Technical Assistance document](#) on the Virtual

Learning: Innovative Leadership [Tools and Supports page](#) can assist with clarifying these data elements.

If you have any questions about coding the section setting, please submit a help desk ticket, at:

<https://support.ride.ri.gov>.

11. *Reminder: Several data collections are open or due this month*

The following are the data-collection deadlines for this month:

- **Tuesday** (December 8): [December Collection - Special Ed Census - Due](#)
- **Tuesday** (December 8): [December Reporting - Special Ed Census - Due](#)
- **Thursday** (December 10): [Duplicates Resolution - Special Ed Census - Closes](#)
- **Thursday** (December 10): [Duplicates Resolution - Special Ed Census Reporting - Closes](#)
- **December 18:** [Review Student Exit Data for Calculation of Cohort Graduation Rates - Due](#)

Information about upcoming data collections can be found on the [data collection calendar](#). Weekly collection [webinars](#) provide details regarding upcoming collections, along with a question-and-answer period.

Assessments:

12. RIDE reminds LEAs of resources, timelines on release of student-level PARCC reports; Spanish-language materials available

As you prepare to communicate PARCC assessment results to parents and families, we would like to remind you of resources available and the timeline for delivery of reports.

Information and resources on the release of PARCC results include:

- Public Results Reports available here:
<https://iss.ride.ri.gov/AssessmentResults>
- Teacher and Student results available on the Instructional Support System, accessed through RIDEmap:
<https://ridemap.ride.ri.gov>
- Webinars for Teacher or Administrators on PARCC score reports here: (click on PARCC Scoring and Results) [PARCC Reports Webinar and PowerPoints](#)
- Support materials are available on the District Exchange Public folder including:
 - PARCC Reports: Teacher Quick Start Guide
 - Preparing for PARCC Results_ Workshop Materials:
 - Administrator, Parent (Spanish and English) and Teacher Toolkits
 - Communication Planning Tool
 - Preparing for PARCC Results PowerPoint
 - November 2015 PARCC Results Release Briefing Materials:
 - PowerPoint template for local results release
 - Excel graph templates for PARCC results

- PARCC data files review document
- Published report guidance document
- Score report interpretation guide
- **New:** Parent letters from the Commissioner in Spanish for both participants and non-participants

The following support materials are also available:

- [PARCC Published Report Guidance document](#)
- [PARCC Score Report Interpretation Guide for Parents](#)
- [Understand the score website](#)
- [PARCC released items](#)
- [Blank] student report shells available in other languages:
 - [Arabic student report shell](#)
 - [Chinese student report shell](#)
 - [Haitian Creole student report shell](#)
 - [Marshallese student report shell](#)
 - [Navajo student report shell](#)
 - [Polish student report shell](#)
 - [Portuguese student report shell](#)
 - [Somali student report shell](#)
 - [Spanish student report shell](#)
 - [Vietnamese student report shell](#)

The following reports should already have been delivered:

- Letter from the Commission to families were delivered to districts.
- Hard copies of high school student reports

These reports are to be delivered by **Thursday** (December 10). Please contact parcc@ride.ri.gov if you do not receive them:

- Parent letter and report shell for non-participants to LEAs. RIDE is delivering these to district leaders.
- Hard copies of grades 3 through 8 student reports are being shipped by Pearson.

From the U.S. Department of Education

13. Obama Administration, U.S. Department of Education praise House re-write of NCLB

Obama Administration and the U.S. Department of Education have praised the action by the House of Representatives to pass the Every Student Succeeds Act, a bipartisan bill to fix No Child Left Behind, and they have called on the Senate to take swift action on the legislation so that it can be signed into law before the end of the year. The bill rejects the overuse of standardized tests and one-size-fits-all mandates on our schools, ensures that our education system will prepare every child to graduate from high school ready for college and careers, and provides more children access to high-quality state preschool programs.

The U.S. Department of Education has prepared a Fact Sheet on the bill, which is posted here:

<http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/fact-sheet-congress-acts-fix-no-child-left-behind>

14. U.S. Department of Education accepting applications for Ambassador Fellows through December 14

Applications for the U.S. Department of Education 2016-17 cohort of [Teaching](#) and [Principal](#) Ambassador Fellows are now available online. As in years past, there are two options for candidates: the Washington Fellowship is a full-time appointment based at the agency headquarters in Washington, D.C., while the Classroom Fellowship enables educators to participate on a part-time basis and still fulfill regular school responsibilities. Applications must be received by **December 14** at 11:59 p.m. (Note: Principal Ambassador Fellow Alicia Perez-Katz reflects on her experience in a [blog post](#).)

15. U.S. Department of Education seeks submissions for Teach to Lead Summit

Calling all teacher leaders: Do you have a great idea for your school or district that you want to put into action? The [Teach to Lead](#) team is now accepting idea submissions for the sixth Teach to Lead Summit, February 13-14, in Baltimore.

From other federal agencies

16. National Science Foundation seeks nominees for Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics, Science Teaching

The 2015-2016 Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) application cycle is in full swing!

PAESMT is the highest honor for a math or science (including computer science) teacher in the United States and over 4,400 outstanding educators have been recognized since the program's inception in 1983.

You can start your application by visiting the [PAEMST website](#) and clicking “Begin or Resume an Application.” While it can seem a bit overwhelming at first, the PAEMST Team offers several resources to help you navigate the process, including:

Online Webinars – The PAEMST team is hosting several Applicant Webinars each week to provide an in depth look at the application, as well as answer your questions as you work through the process. In addition, several Alumni Webinars each month will be added throughout the cycle, featuring former PAEMST awardees and providing a unique perspective of the program. To view a full schedule of webinars and register for a session, please click [here](#) and enter “PAEMST” in the search box.

State Coordinators (SC) –SC’s are your PAEMST liaison. They can answer your questions and provide some tips on how to complete your application. You can find your SC by clicking on “My State Coordinator” along the left hand side of your PAEMST portal home page.

PAEMST Portal – One of the best places to find information and additional support is in your application portal. To access the portal, log in to www.paemst.org. Under the application tab, check out the “Tool & Tips” section on the right side of the page, where you can find recorded versions of the webinars, FAQs for the application video, and more helpful resources.

Help Center - Still can’t find an answer to one of your questions? Is something holding you back from completing your application? You can always contact the PAEMST Team at info@paemst.org or (855) 723-6780 (PAEMST-0). We are here to help!

Becoming a PAEMST awardee can be a truly life-changing experience. PAEMST awardees will gather in Washington, D.C., for a series of events as tribute to their accomplishments, and will receive a certificate signed by the President and a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation (NSF). We hope you'll consider submitting an application for the 2015-2016 application cycle!

Don't forget, the application deadline is **May 1**.

17. National Endowment for the Humanities seeking applicants for summer programs

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) funds [tuition-free summer programs for school and college educators](#). Participants receive stipends to help cover travel and living expenses. Programs are held across the country. These one-to five-week study opportunities focus on important topics, texts, and questions in the humanities; enhance the intellectual vitality and professional development of participants; build a community of inquiry and provide models of excellent scholarship and teaching; and promote connections between teaching and research in the humanities. The deadline for applications is March 1.

From other organizations

18. RIASCD announces professional-learning series focused on personalization and the whole child

Rhode Island ASCD is offering a series of professional-learning opportunities with a focus on personalization and the whole child. The sessions begin with a kick-off to the series on December

16 from 4 to 6 p.m., at Johnston High School. The series kickoff will provide an overview of the Whole Child Tenets and will integrate technology with PBS Digital Learning Media. Each session that follows will develop one tenet in detail, using PBS Digital Media and special breakout sessions. There will be a spotlight on celebrating teacher excellence at culminating conference at the end of the series.

The professional learning series includes:

- December 16 – Kick-off meeting – Overview: the Whole Child Tenets, PBS Digital Learning Media, and the other sessions in the series;
- January 13 – Healthy Child – Healthy Schools Coalition;
- February 10 – Safe Child – Heather Neil: Digital Citizenship – appropriate and responsible technology use in classrooms;
- March 16 – Engaged Child – Steven Krasner: Nudging the Imagination – literacy across the curriculum;
- April 14 – Supported Child – Robert Roccio and Sue Constable: Social and Emotional Learning – a vital component of lifelong success;
- May 11 – Challenged Child – Dawn Manchester: Formative Assessment in a Blended Learning Setting and Ann Kaiser: Engage Your Inner Engineer – the evolution from science to engineering in the STEM classroom; and
- June 8 – Year-end Celebration Conference: A Showcase of Whole Child Schools.

[Register for the sessions HERE](#) or at www.riascd.org.

19. URI offering high-school teachers year-long professional development in marine technology

The Marine Technology for Teachers and Students (MaTTS) Project, based at the University of Rhode Island Inner Space Center and the University of Connecticut Avery Point campus, will be accepting high-school teachers for a year-long professional development opportunity. The project focuses on providing teachers and students hands-on and virtual experiences with new technologies related to exploring the global ocean and discovering pathways to marine careers using these new tools.

Participating teachers will engage colleagues and students at their school, receive training, and gain experience in marine and ocean science technologies and receive a stipend.

The application deadline is Friday, **January 8**.

For more information and to apply, please visit:

www.mattsproject.org.

20. Film-maker available to show, discuss his film on the Narragansett Salt Pond Preserve

Woven in Time: The Narragansett Salt Pond Preserve is a 57-minute documentary film about a small piece of seemingly ordinary land located on the southern coast of Rhode Island. In the 1980s, archaeologists, working for a local developer, unearthed the remains of New England's only undisturbed Pre-Contact Period (1100-1400 A.D.) Native American coastal village. Used for dirt biking and adjacent to a suburban housing development and shopping center, this land, on a pond where the Narragansett Tribe members located their origin story, became

the center of an almost 30-year battle between the rights of property ownership and the social and cultural importance of preserving one of the most important archaeological sites on the East Coast of the United States.

Woven in Time: The Narragansett Salt Pond Preserve is the story of this site and of the stories that emerged from it. Film-maker Marc Levitt is available to show his film to discuss the film at high schools in Rhode Island. The film was made with funding from the Federal Highway Administration and the R.I. Department of Transportation.

Additional Information:

www.facebook.com/WovenInTimeFilm

www.marclevitt.org/filmmaker.htm

Download film stills:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/sfh72zacw9f0waz/AACl1ZniG3SIHXV5Kpu-HJeta?dl=0>

You can contact Marc Levitt at 783-0887 or MarcJoelLevitt@gmail.com.

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InsideRIDE/FieldMemos.aspx>